

Week Ending Friday, March 21, 2003

The President's Radio Address

March 15, 2003

Good morning. This weekend marks a bitter anniversary for the people of Iraq. Fifteen years ago, Saddam Hussein's regime ordered a chemical weapons attack on a village in Iraq called Halabja. With that single order, the regime killed thousands of Iraq's Kurdish citizens. Whole families died while trying to flee clouds of nerve and mustard agents descending from the sky. Many who managed to survive still suffer from cancer, blindness, respiratory diseases, miscarriages, and severe birth defects among their children.

The chemical attack on Halabja, just one of 40 targeted at Iraq's own people, provided a glimpse of the crimes Saddam Hussein is willing to commit and the kind of threat he now presents to the entire world. He is among history's cruelest dictators, and he is arming himself with the world's most terrible weapons.

Recognizing this threat, the United Nations Security Council demanded that Saddam Hussein give up all his weapons of mass destruction as a condition for ending the Gulf war 12 years ago. The Security Council has repeated this demand numerous times and warned that Iraq faces serious consequences if it fails to comply. Iraq has responded with defiance, delay, and deception.

The United States, Great Britain, and Spain continue to work with fellow members of the U.N. Security Council to confront this common danger. We have seen far too many instances in the past decade, from Bosnia to Rwanda to Kosovo, where the failure of the Security Council to act decisively has led to tragedy. And we must recognize that some threats are so grave and their potential consequences so terrible that they must be removed, even if it requires military force.

As diplomatic efforts continue, we must never lose sight of the basic facts about the regime of Baghdad. We know from recent

history that Saddam Hussein is a reckless dictator who has twice invaded his neighbors without provocation, wars that led to death and suffering on a massive scale. We know from human rights groups that dissidents in Iraq are tortured, imprisoned, and sometimes just disappear; their hands, feet, and tongues are cut off; their eyes are gouged out; and female relatives are raped in their presence.

As the Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel said this week, "We have a moral obligation to intervene where evil is in control. Today, that place is Iraq."

We know from prior weapons inspections that Saddam has failed to account for vast quantities of biological and chemical agents, including mustard agent, botulinum toxin, and sarin, capable of killing millions of people. We know the Iraqi regime finances and sponsors terror. And we know the regime has plans to place innocent people around military installations to act as human shields.

There is little reason to hope that Saddam Hussein will disarm. If force is required to disarm him, the American people can know that our Armed Forces have been given every tool and every resource to achieve victory. The people of Iraq can know that every effort will be made to spare innocent life and to help Iraq recover from three decades of totalitarian rule. And plans are in place to provide Iraqis with massive amounts of food, as well as medicine and other essential supplies, in the event of hostilities.

Crucial days lie ahead for the free nations of the world. Governments are now showing whether their stated commitments to liberty and security are words alone or convictions they're prepared to act upon. And for the Government of the United States and the coalition we lead, there is no doubt: We will confront a growing danger, to protect ourselves, to remove a patron and protector of terror, and to keep the peace of the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:21 a.m. on March 14 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

**The President's News Conference
With Prime Minister Jose Manuel
Durao Barroso of Portugal,
President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain,
and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the
United Kingdom in the Azores,
Portugal**

March 16, 2003

Prime Minister Durao Barroso. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am very pleased to welcome here in the Azores the leaders of three friends and allied countries, the United States, Spain, and United Kingdom; President Bush, Prime Minister Aznar, and Prime Minister Tony Blair.

This meeting in the Azores also shows the importance of transatlantic relations and also shows the solidarity among our countries. Actually, these agreements have approved two statements, one statement on transatlantic relations and a statement on Iraq.

We have joined this initiative, and we organized it here in the Azores because we thought this was the last opportunity for a political solution. And this is how we see it: This is the last possibility for a political solution to the problem. Maybe it's a small chance, a small possibility, but even if it's one in one million, it's always worthwhile fighting for a political solution. And I think this is the message that we can get from this Atlantic summit.

As I was saying, for my English-speaking guests, I'll speak English now. First of all, let me say, welcome, George Bush, to Europe. I think it's important that we meet here, in a European country, in Portugal, but in this territory of Azores that is halfway between the continent of Europe and the continent of America. I think it's not only logistically convenient; it has a special polit-

ical meaning, the political meaning of our friendship and our commitment to our shared values.

So welcome to all of you. Welcome to you. And I now give the floor to President George Bush.

President Bush. Jose, thank you very much for your hospitality. You've done a great job on such short notice. And I'm honored to be standing here with you and two other friends as we work toward a great cause, and that is peace and security in this world.

We've had a really good discussion. We've been doing a lot of phone talking, and it was good to get together and to visit and to talk. And we concluded that tomorrow is a moment of truth for the world. Many nations have voiced a commitment to peace and security. And now they must demonstrate that commitment to peace and security in the only effective way, by supporting the immediate and unconditional disarmament of Saddam Hussein.

The dictator of Iraq and his weapons of mass destruction are a threat to the security of free nations. He is a danger to his neighbors. He's a sponsor of terrorism. He's an obstacle to progress in the Middle East. For decades, he has been the cruel, cruel oppressor of the Iraq people.

On this very day 15 years ago, Saddam Hussein launched a chemical weapons attack on the Iraqi village of Halabja. With a single order the Iraqi regime killed thousands of men and women and children, without mercy or without shame. Saddam Hussein has proven he is capable of any crime. We must not permit his crimes to reach across the world.

Saddam Hussein has a history of mass murder. He possesses the weapons of mass murder. He agrees—he agreed to disarm Iraq of these weapons as a condition for ending the Gulf war over a decade ago. The United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1441 has declared Iraq in material breach of its longstanding obligations, demanded once again Iraq's full and immediate disarmament, and promised serious consequences if the regime refused to comply. That resolution was passed unanimously, and its logic is inescapable: The Iraqi regime will